GEOGRAPHIC MEANS TEST (GMT)

RELEASE NOTES

DG *5.3*454
IVM*2*58
EAS*1*13
DG*5.3*456
IVM*2*62

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Introduction

Overview

On January 23, 2002, President Bush signed Public Law 107-135, The Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001. Section 202 of this Act requires the implementation of HUD indices to determine geographic income thresholds in support of more discrete means testing. Veterans in Priority Group 7 are eligible for treatment as a low-income family under section 3(b) of the United States Housing Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)) for the area in which such veterans reside, regardless of whether such veterans are treated as single person families under paragraph (3)(A) of such section 3(b) or as families under paragraph (3)(b). This Act also established Priority Group 8 for any veterans described in section 1710(a)(3) of titles 38 U.S.C. who are not covered by Priority Group 7.

The Geographic Means Testing (GMT) project introduces the following enhancements to the V*IST*A and HEC Legacy systems to support the requirements of the new regulation.

- Storage of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) indices
- Utilization of the HUD indices to determine the GMT Threshold based on the veteran's address
- ZIP Code linking so that the entry of the zip code in the veteran's address automatically populates the CITY, STATE and COUNTY Fields
- Creation of a new means test status, GMT Copay Required, and the calculations needed to assign this new status based on the GMT Threshold
- Means Test Status Category A has been changed to MT Copay Exempt.
- Means Test Status Category C, has been changed to MT Copay Required.
- Creation of the new Priority Group 8 and the modifications to the logic for determining a veteran's enrollment priority. The changes include the new rules for assigning Priority Group 7 and 8.
- Modifications to HL7 messages to accommodate the transmission of new data fields between the VAMCs and the HEC

Purpose of this Manual

The purpose of this Release Notes document is to provide high-level user and technical information about Enrollment-related GMT functionality.

Related Documents

- Revised Admission Discharge Transfer (ADT) Registration Menu User Manual (DG_5_3_P454_UM.PDF)
- GMT Technical Manual (DG_5_3_P454_TM.PDF)
- GMT Installation Guide (DG_5_3_P454_IG.PDF)
- Revised IVM V. 2.0 Technical Manual (IVM_2_P58_TM.PDF)
- GMT Copay Release Notes (IB_2_P183_RN.PDF)

Acronyms and Definitions

Acronyms

Acronym	Description
AI	Address Indexing
AR	Accounts Receivable
FIPS	Federal Information Processing Standard
GMT	Geographic Means Test
HEC	Health Eligibility Center
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
IB	Integrated Billing
MT	Means Test
NVS	National V*IST*A Support
PIMS	Patient Information Management System
VAMC	Veterans Administration Medical Center
OPP	Office of Policy and Planning
HAS	Health Administration Service
OI	Office of Information

Definitions

Term	Definition
Disenrollment	Voluntary request from veteran to discontinue enrollment in the VA Health Care system
GMT Thresholds	a.k.a. HUD Indices. Geographic income level thresholds set yearly by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
MT Thresholds	Income threshold levels set yearly within the VA for the purpose of establishing benefit levels for veterans
HEC Legacy System	M-based database currently used at the HEC

User Release Notes

HUD Indices (a.k.a. Geographic Means Test [GMT] Thresholds)

On January 23, 2002, President Bush signed into law H.R. 3477, The Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001. Section 202 of this Act requires the implementation of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Indices to determine geographic income thresholds in support of more discrete means testing. A new GMT copayment status identifies veterans who qualify for a reduced inpatient copayment rate. The effective date of the regulation to support this legislation is October 1, 2002. Like traditional Means Test thresholds, the GMT thresholds will be applied in a retrospective manner (i.e., HUD Indices published in Calendar Year 2002 will be used for Means Tests performed in Calendar Year 2003). Information about HUD income limits is available on the Data Sets Page of the HUD User Web Site at http://www.huduser.org/datasets/il.html.

The HUD Indices will be uploaded into V*IST*A annually, in a patch released in December of each year. They will be activated on January 1st of each year. The indices from previous years will be stored indefinitely in both V*IST*A and HEC systems. For information about the implementation of HUD Indices, refer to the GMT Installation Guide and GMT Technical Manual.

Address Indexing

Address Indexing in support of GMT adds the following new address functionality:
- Automatically populates CITY, STATE, and COUNTY fields of Patient the Demographics Screen when a ZIP Code is entered during patient registration or edit of patient demographic data (load/edit)
- STATE and COUNTY fields can only be edited by users who hold the EAS GMT COUNTY EDIT security key
- Automatically updates address changes sent from the HEC

GMT Copayment Required Status

A new Means Test Status (GMT Copay Required) identifies veterans who qualify for a reduced inpatient copayment rate (20% of the current inpatient copayment rate). The outpatient copayment rate stays the same. In areas where the GMT threshold is less than or equal to the MT threshold, all veterans required to pay copayments will be billed the full MT copayments as appropriate. Refer to Section 3.1.2 of the Geographic Means Testing SRS for detailed information about the GMT Copayment Required Status business rules. Refer to Appendix A of this document for a matrix of the GMT Enrollment Priority / Copayment Status business rules.

The following veterans are subject to the GMT copayment **when the GMT threshold is greater than the MT threshold**:
- Veterans whose income is less than or equal to the MT threshold **and** whose estate value is greater than or equal to the net worth threshold (pending adjudication)
- Veterans whose income is greater than the MT threshold, **but** less than or equal to the GMT threshold

New User Options
The following new user options are created by the GMT software.

GMT Thresholds Lookup by ZIP Code

Located in the Means Test User Menu, this option returns GMT threshold information based on a user-specified ZIP Code. The user is prompted to enter a ZIP Code. The output includes county name, state, year, ZIP Code, FIPS Code, number in household, and GMT threshold dollar amount. Refer to the Admission Discharge Transfer (ADT) Registration Menu User Manual for information about how to use this option.

View Patient Address
Located in the registration menu, this option displays the address for a user-specified patient, including information about changes associated with the address. Refer to the Admission Discharge Transfer (ADT) Registration Menu User Manual for information about how to use this option.

Modify Enrollment Priority Group 7

Enrollment Priority Group 7 has been modified to include the following veterans ***only if the MT Threshold is less than the GMT Threshold. If the GMT Threshold is equal to or less than the MT Threshold in any locale, there will be no Priority Group 7 veterans for that locale; it will have Priority Group 8 veterans only.*** Refer to Section 3.1.4 of the GMT SRS for detailed information about the business rules for modifying Enrollment Priority Group 7. Refer to Appendix A of this document for a GMT Enrollment Priority / Copayment Matrix.

- Veterans whose income is greater than the MT Threshold **and** less than or equal to the GMT Threshold, **and** are not eligible for placement in a higher priority group
- Veterans whose income is less than or equal to the MT Threshold, but whose net worth (total assets minus debt) is greater than or equal to the Net Worth (Property) Threshold (currently set at $80K) **and** are not eligible for placement in a higher priority group
- Veterans included in Priority Group 7 will be divided into the following sub-categories:
  - **Group 7a**: Noncompensable 0% service-connected veterans who were in an enrolled status on a specified date announced in a Federal Register document and who subsequently do not request disenrollment
  - **Group 7c**: Non-service-connected veterans who are in an enrolled status on a specific date announced in a Federal Register document and who subsequently do not request disenrollment

Create Enrollment Priority Group 8

The GMT software creates a new Enrollment Priority Group 8 that includes the following veterans. ***If the GMT Threshold is equal to or less than the MT Threshold in any locale, there will be no Priority Group 7 veterans for that locale; it will have Priority Group 8 veterans only.*** Refer to Section 3.1.5 of the GMT SRS for detailed information about the business rules for creating Enrollment Priority Group 8. Refer to Appendix A of this document for a GMT Enrollment Priority / Copayment Matrix.

- Veterans whose income is greater than the MT threshold **and** greater than the GMT Threshold
- Veterans who decline to provide income information **and** who agree to make MT copayments
- Veterans whose income exceeds the MT Threshold **and** who live in a location where the GMT Threshold is less than or equal to the MT Threshold
- Veterans included in Priority Group 8 will be divided into the following sub-categories:
  - **Group 8a**: Noncompensable 0% service-connected veterans who were in an enrolled status on a specified date announced in a Federal Register document **and** who subsequently do not request disenrollment
  - **Group 8c**: Non-service-connected veterans who are in an enrolled status on a specific date announced in a Federal Register document **and** who subsequently do not request disenrollment

Changes to Hardship Determinations

The following enhancements have been made to the process of determining hardships at the VAMC level:

- Hardship determination is available to veterans whose MT is less than 366 days old and reflects income above the MT threshold.
- Veterans who provide proof that projected current year income is less than or equal to the MT threshold will be classified as MT copayment exempt and placed in the appropriate priority group.
- Veterans who provide proof that projected current year income is greater than the MT threshold but below the GMT threshold for the veteran's current address will be classified as GMT copayment required and placed in the appropriate priority group.
- The hardship process is applied locally only (at the VAMC level; does not occur at the HEC), but is shared nationally via the EDB and HEC Legacy system.
- The hardship determination has no impact on eligibility for cost-free medication or LTC copayments; it applies to inpatient and outpatient copayments only.
- A Hardship Reason field shall be created and shared via the HEC Legacy system/EDB with all sites of record.

Changes to Reports

The following reports have been modified to display Priority Group 8 or GMT Copay Required status references:

- Means Test Signature Detail Report
- Means Test Signature Summary Report
- Enrolled Veteran Report
- Enrollees by Status, Priority, Preferred Facility
- EGT Preliminary Summary Impact Report
- EGT Preliminary Detailed Impact Report
- EGT Actual Summary Impact Report
- EGT Actual Detail Impact Report
- Means Test Daily Expiration Report
- Means Test/Eligibility/Enrollment Report
- Means Test Comparison Report
- List Required/Pending Means Tests

Changes to Category A and Category C References

Although this does not affect the GMT functionality, all user viewable references to Category A and Category C means test statuses in enrollment-related software have been modified to reflect the following changes:

Category A (Cat A) is now MT Copay Exempt
Category C (Cat C) is now MT Copay Required

Technical Release Notes

Patch Installation Sequence

Implementation will require each site to install a series of patches in a sequential manner with approximately three to five working days to install the patches at each step. Synchronized national install timing is critical, as implementation cannot proceed from one step to the next step until all VAMCs have successfully completed each step. Due to the data conversion and billing components, there can be no exception to this requirement. It is critical that all sites promptly install the GMT patches in the order specified in the following table.

Step	Patches	Release to NVS	National Release to Field	Compliance Date	Comments
1	**IB Part 1** IB*2.0*179	**9/20/02**	**9/25/02**	**9/30/02**	Effective Date: 10/1/02
2	**AI Kernel** XU*8*246 ***The following patches are being released in HOST file DG_53_P454.KID:*** **Enrollment V*IST*A Part 1** DG *5.3*454 IVM*2*58 **PIMS** DG*5.3*466 SD*5.3*258	**11/25/02**	**12/2/2002**	**12/4/2002**	1. Release Kernel patch first; sites must install before PIMS & Enrollment patches. 2. Release PIMS & Enrollment patches in HOST file DG_53_P454.KID. 3. NVS sends patches to Hines Anonymous directory 11/29 and monitors replication to Albany & SLC servers 11/30 – 12/1. 4. Project Implementation Team will contact sites not in compliance on 12/5/02.
3	**HEC Legacy** IVMB*2*686	N/A	**Release to HEC Production 12/9/02**	**12/11/02**	Monitor in HEC production 12/9-10-11
4	***The following files are being released in HOST file EAS_1_P13.KID:*** **Enrollment V*IST*A Part 2** EAS*1*13 DG*5.3*456 IVM*2*62 **IB Part 2** IB*2.0*183 PRCA*4.5*181	**12/5/02**	**12/16/02**	**12/19/02**	1. Release PIMS & Enrollment patches in HOST file EAS_1_P13.KID. **2.** NVS sends patches to Hines Anonymous directory 12/13 and monitors replication to Albany & SLC servers 12/13 – 12/14. **3.** Project Implementation Team will contact sites not in compliance on 12/20/02.
5	*All patches listed in Steps 1 – 4 above must be operational at sites on 1/03/03*				
6	IVM*2*67 DG*5.3*481 IB*2.0*202	Approximately 2 weeks after conversion completion (date TBD)	TBD	TBD	Clean up patches to remove code no longer used after GMT conversion completes. Patches will be released in a HOST file.

Address Indexing (AI)

Address Indexing is a sub-project of GMT that provides:
- Address changes to support GMT
  - Creates two new files to standardize the FIPS County Code
    - Postal Code File (#5.12) (stores all known Postal Codes as well as other associated information related to the Postal Code)
    - County Code File (#5.13) (contains all known US County FIPS codes according to the USGS, HUD, and USPS)
  - Provides an automated process that matches the veteran's address (FIPS county code) against the GMT thresholds
  - Modifies the HL7 Z05 receiver process to accept the FIPS county code
  - Modifies the HL7 Z07 builder to send the FIPS county code
- Enhanced address functionality
  - Zip code linkage
  - Add changed address functionality
  - Changes to HL7 messages (see HL7 Messaging Changes section of this document)

HL7 Messaging Changes

Z05, Demographic Data Transmission
- Added FIPS County Code to the receiver process to support address indexing

Z07, Full Data Transmission from VAMC to HEC
- Added GMT Copayment Status to the ZMT Segment of the Z07 message and builder process
- Added Hardship Reason field to the ZMT Segment of the Z07 message and builder process
- Added RF1 segment to ORU~Z07 & ORF~Z07
- Send FIPS County Code to HEC to support address indexing

Z10, Income Test Data Transmission from HEC to VAMC
- Added GMT Copayment Status to the ZMT Segment.
- Added Hardship Reason field to the ZMT Segment.

Data Dictionary Changes

PATIENT (File #2)

A trigger was added to the following fields to update the ADDRESS CHANGE DT/TM field whenever they are changed. The AZIPLNK cross-reference was added to automatically update the CITY, STATE and COUNTY fields when a zip code is entered.

Field #	Field Name
.111	STREET ADDRESS [LINE 1]
.1112	ZIP+4
.112	STREET ADDRESS [LINE 2]
.113	STREET ADDRESS [LINE 3]
.114	CITY
.115	STATE
.116	ZIP CODE

The following new fields were added:

Field #	Field Name	Field Type	Node/Piece
.118	ADDRESS CHANGE DT/TM	DATE/TIME	.11;13
.119	ADDRESS CHANGE SOURCE	SET OF CODES	.11;14
.12	ADDRESS CHANGE SITE	POINTER File #4	.11;15

PATIENT ENROLLMENT (File #27.11)

The following field was modified:

Field #	Field Name	Field Type	New Value
.07	ENROLLMENT PRIORITY	SET OF CODES	8:GROUP 8

ENROLLMENT GROUP THRESHOLD (File #27.16)

The following field was modified:

Field #	Field Name	Field Type	New Value
.02	EGT PRIORITY	SET OF CODES	8:GROUP 8

MAS PARAMETERS (File #43)

The following new field was added:

Field #	Field Name	Field Type	Node/Piece
1203	NET WORTH CALCULATION	SET OF CODES	GMT;1

ANNUAL MEANS TEST (File #408.31)

The following new fields were added:

Field #	Field Name	Field Type	Node/Piece
.27	GMT THRESHOLDS	NUMERIC	0;27
2.09	HARDSHIP REASON	FREE TEXT	2;9

MEANS TEST STATUS (File #408.32)

The following new entry was added to the file:

NUMBER:	16
NAME:	GMT COPAY REQUIRED
CODE:	G
TYPE OF TEST:	MEANS TEST
DESCRIPTION:	This status is assigned by the system or the user. If a veteran's income is below the annual threshold for this category, the means test is assigned this status and subsequent category of care. This is determined when the user completes the means test for a veteran. This status can also be assigned by the user when adjudicating a means test.
EFFECTIVE DATE:	JAN 01, 2002
ACTIVE:	YES

Input Template Changes

DGRPT 10-10T REGISTRATION (File #2)
This template is modified to change the order of address fields for editing to allow auto-population of the city, state and county.

Security Key Changes

EAS GMT COUNTY EDIT
This is a new security key. Users holding the key have the ability to edit the STATE and COUNTY fields in the PATIENT File (#2).

One-time Conversion at the HEC

A one-time conversion of veterans who declined to provide income information or whose income is greater than the MT threshold will occur in the HEC Legacy system upon implementation of the GMT software. This conversion will determine whether these veterans should be placed in the new Priority Group 8 or the new GMT Copay Required means test status. This conversion will only take place in the HEC Legacy system. The results of the conversion will be transmitted to all applicable VAMCs upon completion of the process. Refer to Section 3.2.11 of the Geographic Means Testing SRS for detailed information about the conversion process business rules. Refer to Appendix B of this document for a conversion matrix for MT Copay Required veterans.

Appendix A – GMT Enrollment Priority / Copayment Status Matrix

GMT Enrollment Priority / Copayment Matrix					
Income vs. Thresholds	**Estate vs. Net Worth Threshold**	**Veteran's Enrollment Priority**	**Exceptions to Veteran's Enrollment Priority**	***Copayment Status**	**Comment**
Less than MT	Less than Net Worth Threshold ($80K)	Priority 5	If Catastrophically Disabled, Priority 4	MT Copay Exempt	
Less than MT	Greater than Net Worth Threshold ($80K)	Priority 7	• If exposed to Agent Orange, Ionizing Radiation, or Environmental Contaminants, Priority 6. • If Catastrophically Disabled, Priority 4	GMT Copay Required	Pending Adjudication **Note: In this rule, GMT threshold is greater than MT threshold**
Less than MT	Greater than Net Worth Threshold ($80K)	Priority 8	• If exposed to Agent Orange, Ionizing Radiation, or Environmental Contaminants, Priority 6. • If Catastrophically Disabled, Priority 4	MT Copay Required	Pending Adjudication **Note: In this rule, GMT threshold is less than MT threshold**
Greater than MT Less than GMT	Not applicable	Priority 7	• If exposed to Agent Orange, Ionizing Radiation, or Environmental Contaminants, Priority 6. • If Catastrophically Disabled, Priority 4	GMT Copay Required	
Greater than MT Greater than GMT	Not applicable	Priority 8	• If exposed to Agent Orange, Ionizing Radiation, or Environmental Contaminants, Priority 6. • If Catastrophically Disabled, Priority 4	MT Copay Required	

*GMT copayment = regular outpatient MT copayment rate and 20% of current inpatient MT copayment rate

Appendix B – Conversion Matrix for MT Copay Required Veterans

Conversion Matrix for MT Copay Required Veterans			
Current Status		**Post Implementation Status**	
Enrollment Priority	**Income Less Than GMT**	**Enrollment Priority Group**	**MT Copay Status**
4	Yes	4	GMT Copay Required
4	No	4	MT Copay Required
6	Yes	6	GMT Copay Required
6	No	6	MT Copay Required
7	Yes	7	GMT Copay Required **Only if MT is within past year & GMT is greater than MT threshold**
7	No	8	MT Copay Required
7	• Declines to provide financial information • Agrees to Pay Copayments	8	MT Copay Required
Net Worth determination on all veterans providing income			
Income	**Net Worth**		
Less than MT	Greater than $80K	7	GMT Copay Required **If GMT threshold is greater than MT threshold**
Less than MT	Greater than $80K	8	MT Copay Required **If GMT threshold is less than MT threshold**